

# THE DAILY AZTEC

## Zooming up and down the golden coast

### Votes this November will bring high speed to California's coast

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Grabbing lunch at the Golden Gate Bridge has never been so convenient. This coming November, California taxpayers will be voting on the construction of the state's first high-speed bullet-train. By 2020, the 220-mph electric-powered machine will propel millions of Californians from San Diego to Sacramento in just a few hours. All that remains is a vote from taxpayers to approve over \$103 million for the next fiscal year alone and an overall price tag of \$40 billion by 2020.

Proposed by the California High-Speed Rail Authority ([www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov)), the high-speed train must tackle many obstacles before it can speed back and forth up the golden coast. In 2007, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger pushed against funding for such a project, and again in 2008 is asking for a decrease in the rail authority's budget. If this were to happen, the creation of such a fast paced form of transportation would look very bleak.

After 9/11, Amtrak, one of the nation's biggest passenger rail corporations, experienced an increased boost in ticket sales. Seven years later, the corporation is facing financial woes as airport security has become more strict and has begun to give citizens a bit more peace of mind. But with California's increasing gas prices and greenhouse gas emission fees, the bullet-train of the future is beginning to look more attractive to taxpayers and may be the answer to rail corporations' doubts. With our struggles abroad as a nation, it isn't a secret that our dependency on foreign oil and the high price tag that is attached to it is increasing our gas prices. The California High-Speed Rail Authority has promised that the new high-speed train is designed to "reduce dependence on foreign oil by about five million barrels a year."

On their Web site the authority has vowed that the new design would "eliminate the CO2 emissions that cause global warming by 12.4 billion pounds per year versus highway and air travel. That's equivalent to removing a million vehicles from roads, or 11 billion miles traveled each year."

A win at the polls this November would be a big boost for rail enthusiasts statewide as well as environmentalists all over the nation. With its advantages of helping California's ongoing congestion issues and high amounts of CO2 emissions, the high-speed train seems to be a sure winner. All that is missing to this equation is the money. The rail authority has high hopes of getting taxpayers to approve almost \$10 billion next year alone, arguing that a majority of the funding will come from private investors and businesses. And with endorsements from the likes of Amtrak and the cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles, a late push for the measure is looking favorable.

This November will affect the future of our state's ability to provide enough room for the increasing population by 2020. Will our children be exposed to a California with congested highways and rampant levels of pollution, or will they be exposed to the California that is moving swiftly into the future with low levels of pollution with a free-flowing form of transportation?